

In Step on Channel 2

6:30 a.m. In Step
8 a.m. In Step
Noon In Step
6 p.m. In Step
10 p.m. In Step

Fort Riley Community



April 4, 2003

America's Warfighting Center

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Rear detachments take care of business while units away

By Jamie Bender

Staff writer

In the past several weeks, many Fort Riley units have deployed to the Central Command area of operation. While the bulk of the unit is gone, a rear detachment stays behind to take care of soldiers who will follow and the families who are waiting for soldiers to come home.

"The purpose of the rear detachment is two fold," said Capt. Dean Martin, rear detachment commander, 82nd Medical Company.

"The soldiers that are going to follow-on (to join the unit) need to be trained up, issued their equipment and get their soldier readiness program done. My job is to get them ready to go," he

said.

The primary job of the rear detachment is to field issues that arise at home, said Martin. "I handle anything from mail not being delivered to a forwarding address to issues of finance," said Martin. "Some of the more challenging ones are when a spouse is not hearing from a soldier. The difficulty there is the communication with the deployed unit."

Communicating with the forward unit has become more difficult for the rear detachments. "Right now, because of the phase of the war, they are on the move," said Martin.

"I had great contact at first. They had a phone line and they called on a regular basis. They also had access to e-mail. They have since moved to a location

that doesn't have these capabilities. The few calls they have been able to make have been going to spouses."

The rear detachments also work closely with the Family Readiness Groups.

While the rear detachments handle things that require military involvement, such as finance, awards and records, the FRG handles other issues that pertain to

taking care of the home front.

"The FRG leaders are awesome," said Martin. "They handle many of the same issues about not getting mail or not hearing from the deployed soldier. They set up informational meetings that are a great tool to distribute information."

The FRG also offers support that the rear detachment commander may not be as able to.

"One of the needs that (an FRG leader) can meet that I can't is emotional support," said Martin. "She understands what they are going through because she is going through the same thing."

One of the biggest challenges the rear detachment faces is time. "The soldiers have different needs, and the spouses have their needs," explained Martin. "We have to work with other people's time constraints, too."

Martin has set a goal of a four-hour response time. "I have not yet missed that," he said.

"I might not always have the answer in four hours, but I will get back to them and let them know that I am working on the issue." The rear detachments are available at any time.

"The Family Readiness Center is open 24 hours," said Martin. "The 937th Engineer Group has at least one person here at all times."

While the job of commanding the rear detachment is hectic, Martin said it is also rewarding. "When I get a phone call from a distressed spouse and I let them know that the last I knew (the soldier) was fine, I can hear relief in their voice," he said.

Sometimes that's all it takes. Even if I don't feel like I have solved their problem, they know that someone is listening for them and looking out for their welfare. Watching the battle on the news, I know I am doing my part to keep the soldiers minds on the fight. I take care of issue back here so they don't have to think about them."

"When I get a phone call from a distressed spouse and I let them know that the last I knew (the soldier) was fine, I can hear relief in their voice."

—Capt. Dean Martin
82nd Medical Company
Rear Detachment Commander



Students from Fort Riley Elementary School tie yellow ribbons to the fence to show their support of the soldiers who are currently deployed.

Post library offers many services to ID cardholders

By Kim Levine

Staff writer

Books, videos, newspapers or computers, the post library has it all.

Fort Riley's library, located in building 5306, behind Fort Riley National Bank and the post office, offers many different services to all Department of Defense identification card holders and their families.

The library not only has a variety of reading materials, but also equipment, such as two internet-access computers, a typing machine, photocopier and microfiche reader. Several movies and videos, both entertainment and educational, are available as well.

Included in the over 15,000 items in the library are collections of non-fiction and fiction books for all ages. A reference collection is available for use, but cannot be checked out.

The library also has military, educational, recreational and young adults' collections, and is host to the Protestant Women of the Chapel faith and family collection. Language books are also available.

Arlette Conrad, librarian, said educational materials, such as the GED preparation books, and repair books, such as auto repairs, are very popular.

Current and past editions of newspapers and magazines are also on-hand in the library. The library has about 60 different magazines, targeting all demographics, and newspapers from Manhattan, Topeka, Kansas City, Junction City and the USA Today.

The library has several collections of books on tape as well, including recreational, educational and children's.

Fort Riley's library also offers programs for the

community. Every Saturday at 2:30 p.m. is story-time for children, ages 3 to 13.

Along with listening to readings, children sometimes work on crafts and poetry. Conrad said she prefers if people call ahead and sign in for story-time, but calling is not necessary, and story-time is no charge to attendees.

The library sponsors a summer reading program for school-aged children as well. This is a seven-week program in which children read about different subjects. If children complete the program, they are awarded prizes.

"The program is focused on encouraging children to continue reading while they are out of school," said Conrad. Children must register through the library for the program.

In addition to the children's program, Fort Riley also participates in the Army Library Program, which encourages soldiers to continue gaining knowledge by reading and researching. The program periodically recommends lists of readings for soldiers, based on ranks, and Fort Riley has the lists and some of the materials available.

If you like to read paperback books, the post library maintains a paperback book exchange. Paperback books of all kinds are available for exchange. Anyone can bring in a paperback and take home another. While Conrad said the general rule is bring one, take one, she also said they are flexible.

People may check out up to 20 items at a time. Books and audio titles can be out for 30 days, and videos and kits can be out for seven days.

The library is open Tuesday through Saturday, 1 - 8 p.m. and Sundays, 1 - 6 p.m. It is closed Mondays. For more information on library services, call 239-5305.



Crossroads of Leadership group tours post, attends classes

By William Biles

Staff writer

The 2003 Crossroads Leadership class, made up of community leaders from the Junction City area, visited post March 25, to become more familiar with the facilities and the people who live and work on the installation.

The class had a full schedule, ranging from their classes in the morning to touring the Close Combat Tactical Trainer in the afternoon. The members of the class also received a tour of the post's housing, as well as getting a look at the quality of living for single soldiers in their barracks.

The class was made up of a broad spectrum of people recruited from Junction City businesses.

"Today is our annual Fort Riley Day where we get to see how the Fort Riley community interacts with the Junction City community," said Tricia Gowen, services

director, Junction City.

When the class finished touring the billets, they were greeted by Brig. Gen. Frank Helmick, commander, 24th Infantry Division and Fort Riley.

Helmick spoke to the members about what has been happening at the post with unit deployments and the reservists being activated and stationed here prior to their deployment.

"As you can see, Fort Riley has a lot of things going on. There is nothing more important than making sure the local community understands what it is that we are doing, because in the long run, we're one team," said Helmick.

After Helmick talked to the members and thanked them for visiting, they were all treated to a Meal Ready to Eat for lunch.

After they ate their lunch, they loaded into a van to go and visit the CCTT, where they were able to sit in and operate the simulators. "The whole day was very

impressive for me, but what I enjoyed the most was watching the other members operating the simulator," said Reynard Wright, city commissioner, Junction City.

The class was also given a historic tour of the post that included visiting Custer House.

The Crossroads class finished their day of touring by watching the Fort Riley Honor Guard put on a demonstration.

The importance of the community leader's visit to Fort Riley was evident to the class members.

All in all, the communities need to know how each other works and the concepts they use to achieve their goals, said Wright.

Through that understanding, the communities will be able to grow together, Wright said.



Brig. Gen. Frank Helmick, commander, 24th Infantry Division and Fort Riley, speaks to the members of the Crossroads Leadership Class during their visit to Fort Riley.

Program helps family members find jobs

By Kim Levine
Staff Writer

Family members of soldiers are faced with many unique challenges, some more trying than others. Finding employment in their new area does not have to be a challenge any more.

Fort Riley's Army Community Services offers a program to help soldier's family members find jobs.

Through the Employment Readiness Program under ACS at Fort Riley, family members can get assistance finding jobs in the area, learn necessary professional skills and gain experience needed to be competitive in the job market.

The goal of ERP is to match family members with local employment opportunities so they do not have to start from scratch with each move, said Ollie Willis, ERP coordinator.

"About 85 percent of military installations have programs like this," said Willis, but many of them are under utilized.

Willis said the program works in three ways. ERP helps residents of Fort Riley find employment opportunities in the area. It can help family members moving to the area to find employment before they get here, or it can help residents relocating from Fort Riley to another installation find employment opportunities in their new area.

"We assist family members by providing training and helping them to plan the relocation for employment purposes, hopefully getting themselves employed

before they leave the last duty station to go someplace else," said Willis.

For family members at Fort Riley, the process begins with a personal assessment.

"We initially do an assessment of knowledge, skills and abilities to establish where the client is right now as far as job skills and readiness," said Willis. "We determine through that assessment and counseling what their employment options are."

Based on the findings of the assessment, the ERP counselor will recommend a plan of action, whether that begins with education first or an immediate search for jobs in the area.

"The assessment will tell the counselor and the clients whether they need to upgrade their skills, get new skills or use the skills they have to continue going from that point," said Willis.

ERP may recommend a client take courses through the Education Center on post or gain experience through volunteer work around post. Additionally, ERP will assist with other skills, such as typing and learning about computers.

Willis holds an Orientation and Intake Briefing every Tuesday morning where she provides an overview of the job market and employment resources. She also explains the differences in eligibilities and status someone may need if applying for government service employment.

"I provide them with the complete employment and job seeking resources that are available to them — resources necessary to

initiate a job search," Willis said.

It does not take long to find jobs in this area, Willis said. The average length of time for clients with basic knowledge, skills and abilities to find jobs is between two weeks and one month.

ERP works with the surrounding communities to find available jobs through their Job-Service Centers, Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development agencies. Willis said she gets additional vacancies through the employers themselves.

"The majority of semi-professional and professional jobs available are not on base, but in the surrounding communities," said Willis. "There are jobs available at Fort Riley, but they are generally the minimum wage jobs."

ERP also posts a "hot jobs board" and has a job bank that lists local vacancies. Both of these are located at the Soldier and Family Support Center, building 7264, and are available for anyone to look through.

"If family members do not have the skills to search for jobs on their own, I assist them in gaining those skills as well," said Willis. "The program covers those without skills, those with medium skills and experts."

ERP provides information at job fairs on Fort Riley as well. Willis said she sets up a booth outside of where the potential employers are to assist family members in understanding what they need to do when they go inside. Additionally, ERP is working on setting up an interview techniques class.

Willis said the program has

several benefits, both for her and for the family members.

"I enjoy seeing the glow on someone's face, who did not think they had any skills, when they complete a resume and know that is truly what they can do," said Willis.

For the family members, ERP is correcting a problem that has been wrong for a long time, said Willis.

"By requiring the non-soldier family member to start from zero every time they move, the needs and desire for growth and education have always been put on the back burner," said Willis. "Now, it doesn't have to be. That's the biggest gain for family members."

For example, they now have a mechanism where if they are coming from Korea to Fort Riley, a program is in place that can tell them what the job situation is here, and they know what they need to do before they leave to prepare for this job situation, said Willis.

ERP at Fort Riley was restarted under ACS in February 2001, as a required program to gain accreditation for ACS. Willis said her clients have been employed in positions ranging from the Deputy Prosecutor in Junction City to daycare assistants and sales associates.

The program is free of charge and available to family members of all active duty and retired service members, including reservists and National Guard soldiers called to active duty and Department of Defense civilians. To sign up for the briefing or for more information on ERP, contact Ollie Willis at 239-9435.

Earth Day celebrates environment

By Kim Levine
Staff Writer

Earth Day is an international celebration of the environment, where people everywhere take part in events and actions that educate, spread awareness and push for tangible change. On April 22, Earth Day will mark its 33rd anniversary. Earth Day is based on the philosophy that ordinary people together can achieve extraordinary things.

Earth Day began in 1969, when former U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson played off of the college-campus war protesters to rally support for environmental issues, hoping to bring the subject into the political light, according to the EnviroLink Earth Day website. About 20 million people participated in the first Earth Day.

Today, the movement has grown considerably, from a grass-roots campaign to a professionally organized special interest. Environmental organizations have grown all over the world, and Earth Day is a well-known and celebrated occasion. For more information on Earth Day and Fort Riley's participation, see this week's special insert, created and compiled by the Fort Riley Directorate of Environment and Safety, or visit www.earthday.enviroink.org on the Internet.

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Fort Riley teen competes for Youth of the Year

Teen Center Release

One of Fort Riley's teens, Victor Arias Jr, traveled to Wichita on March 14 to compete against five other Kansas teens for the state's Boys and Girls Club of America Youth of the Year. Victor is a sophomore at Junction City High School and the son of Staff Sgt. Victor Arias and Teresa Arias.

Arias was nominated by staff at the Fort Riley Teen Center, along with two other individuals, to vie for the opportunity to represent Fort Riley at the Kansas B&GCA Youth of the Year competition. All three youth from Fort Riley had to meet certain criteria to compete. They had to write two essays, one explaining what the Fort Riley Teen Center's B&GCA meant to them and one to express why a post-high school education is important to them. Each one of the candidates also had to have community service, contributions to their homes and families, school involvement (to include grades) and show good characteristics, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring and fairness. Victor was selected for

this honor and began practicing the three-minute speech he was required to present during the judging on the evening of the March 14 competition.

Arias went through the selection process of being interviewed by a panel of four judges, and later, during the Youth of the Year dinner, he gave his speech. Arias discussed how difficult military life could sometimes be for teens,

having to move frequently and make new friends with each move. He talked about the pitfalls the Fort Riley Teen Center has helped him to avoid, such as drugs, alcohol and juvenile crimes, as well as gang involvement. He said the Teen Center staff not only accepted him the very first day he arrived, they also respected him, which was not something he had experienced in

other places.

Arias did not win the Kansas Youth of the Year competition, but made it as a finalist for the second year in a row. The president of the National Boys & Girls Club of America was present for the banquet and presented Arias with a trophy for his participation in the competition.

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Fort Riley Sports

April 4, 2003

America's Warfighting Center

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MP battalion takes Commander's Cup

By William Biles
Staff Writer

The 924TH Military Police Battalion received the Commander's Cup from Brig. Gen. Frank Helmick, commander, 24th Infantry Division and Fort Riley, March 18, at the King Field House.

The MP's men have won the cup for three straight years and the women have won it two years in a row. To win the cup for three years running, the men's team defeated 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery. The competition between the two units was neck-and-neck throughout the year. The 924th MP Bn. beat the 4th Bn., 1st FA with the total score of 3,267 to 3,182. This year's difference was a total of 85 points.

The females, on the other hand, routed the other units with a total of 1,290 points. That total was well ahead of their closest competition, 1st Finance Battalion, by a margin of 790 points.

The purpose of the award is to create an avenue by which the Commanding General can recognize units for their consistent involvement in athletics at a variety of levels.

The units accumulating the most points in excellence of the sports they take part in, as well as points achieved by participating throughout the year, will be awarded the Commander's Trophy. The trophy is then displayed within the unit for all to see, while vying for the honor of maintaining control of it for another year.

"As a battalion, our soldiers train hard and enjoy each other's camaraderie and were able to come out here and make things happen," said Lt. Col. Pamela Martin, commander, 924th MP Bn.

The Commander's Cup victory wasn't an easy one to achieve for the MPs.

The MP Battalion had some of its team members deployed to support Operation Noble Eagle for six months and some deployed with 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry for six months.

"I think the biggest challenge was

scrapping together teams despite missing a company and a half of soldiers for most of last year," said Capt. Dan Lorenzen, commander, 977th Military Police Company.

The yearlong competition took a ton of effort to win.

This past year, we as a battalion have had a unit (300th Military Police Company) deployed to Washington D.C. as well as two platoon deployments from the 977th MP Co. Additionally, we started preparations in January for our deployment and still managed to participate and win the Commander's Cup," said Lorenzen. "It was definitely a battalion wide effort."

There were other benefits for the soldiers who were able to partake in the sporting events.

"All year long it was a good way for the soldiers to let off some steam. Even though we have had mission support for the installation around the clock, the soldiers were still willing to participate in the sporting events. It was also a good way for them to meet other soldiers from around the post they wouldn't normally get to meet," said Martin.

The achievement, while the battalion has been short-handed, speaks volumes about the soldiers and their work ethic.

"I think this accomplishment shows how professional the soldiers of this battalion are. They work hard, and they play hard," said Lorenzen.

A lot of the soldier's motivation to win the cup was taking pride in doing the best job they can, regardless of the circumstances, he said.

The enlisted soldiers were not the only ones having all of the fun and adding to the competition.

The command supported their athletes by leading by example and participating in the games whenever it was possible, said Lorenzen.

The command did not have to persuade its soldiers to play in the games throughout the year.

"We have a lot of athletically inclined soldiers who like to participate in sports. It doesn't matter if they have ever played that particular sport or not. We encourage them to try, and they do," concluded Lorenzen.



Post-Biles

Chrispy Casiano, 977th Military Police Company, attempts a jump shot over the defending hands of Jon-Michael French, 300th Military Police Company, during an intramural basketball game earlier in the year.

Top chess players sought for All Army

By Victoria Palmer
FSC Public Affairs

The 2003 All Army Chess Championship will pit the Army's top chess players against each other in competition June 20-27 at Fort Myer in Arlington, Va.

The annual event is a United States Chess Federation-rated tournament that attracts the Army's best chess players.

Soldiers are selected for the tournament based on their United States Chess Federation-rated tournament activity, level of tournament play and current USCF rating, said Kris D'Alessandro, recreation center program manager, of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center in Alexandria, Va.

Players do not need to participate in installation or major Army command tournaments to qualify for the championship tournament, D'Alessandro said. Soldiers who have been on active duty 90 days or more are eligible to apply to compete in the tournament. Reserve and National Guard soldiers who have been activated and are serving on active duty may also be eligible.

The 2003 All Army Chess Championship will be conducted by a USCF-certified tournament director according to USCF Official Rules of Chess, using a seven-game round robin format.

The tournament application form and detailed information is available online at the Army MWR Web site at www.armymwr.com. Go to Rec and Leisure, select "Community Rec Centers Program" and click on "Army Chess" to complete the application online. Interested

players can also apply by fax or mail.

In addition to the application, soldiers must send a release memorandum signed by their commander ensuring their availability for and approving their participation in both the Army and international competitions.

Submission deadline for the 2003 championship tournament is May 28, 2003.

Tournament participants' travel and lodging will be arranged by the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.

The top six finishers will form the Army Chess Team and will participate in the Inter-service Chess Competition Aug. 4-8 at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base, N.C.

Winners of the Inter-service Chess Competition will comprise the United States Military Chess Team and go on to represent the United States against 13 NATO countries at the 14th International Military Chess Championships in Copenhagen, Denmark in September.

According to D'Alessandro, the objective of the annual All-Army Chess Championship is to promote interest in the Army recreation program through the application of mental skills that relate to military strategy. It gives soldiers a chance to enhance their combat readiness by applying learned skills in logic and strategic thinking at the Army's highest level of competition.

"MWR continues to provide programs to support soldiers' morale, which is especially critical in times of increased tempo," said D'Alessandro.

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K-State Wildcats' baseball season off to disappointing start

By William Biles
Staff Writer

The Kansas State Wildcats dropped their second baseball game, in a three game series, against the Missouri Tigers by a score of 8 - 3 at Tointon Family Stadium Saturday.

With the second win of the series, the Tigers claimed the series over the Wildcats for the first time since 2000 and the first time in Manhattan since 1997.

Missouri extended its winning streak to eight and improved to 19 - 8 overall and 5 - 3 in Big 12 Conference play, while Kansas State extended its slide, losing their last seven games, falling to 10 - 15 on the season and 0 - 5 in league action.

The seven-game losing streak is the longest by a Wildcat team since 1997, while the five-game skid in league games is the longest since starting the 2000

season, were they had six straight defeats.

The Tigers were the first to score with one run on a hit in the top of the second inning. A Wildcat designated hitter, Lee Laskowski, who had led off the inning by being hit with a pitch, scored on a RBI single by Tiger's third baseman, Jeremy Hernandez.

Missouri added two more runs in the third inning on two hits, a sacrifice fly and a balk. Tiger's outfielder, Jayce Tingler, led off the inning with a walk on five pitches, then he moved to third on back-to-back singles by outfielder Ryan Rallo and third baseman Zane Taylor. After a strikeout, Missouri catcher Brad Flanders scored Tingler on a sacrifice fly to right field before Wildcat starter Sean Clancy was called for a balk which scored Rallo. This brought the score to 3 - 0.

In the fourth inning, the Tigers

tallied another two runs on two hits. Tingler scored outfielder Tyrone Robertson from third base on a sacrifice fly and Rallo doubled to left field, which scored shortstop Adam Garrett.

The Wildcats received their first run in the fifth inning on two hits. With the Wildcats' catcher, Ryan Baldwin on base, shortstop Brett Williams smacked the ball into right-center for a double that brought Baldwin across the plate.

After a scoreless sixth inning, the Tigers added another two runs to the scoreboard in the seventh and tacked on one more in the eighth, which increased their lead over the Cats to 8 - 1.

Two Wildcat errors in the seventh inning were the cause of the Missouri scores, while in the eighth, Taylor brought in Tingler from third with a RBI single.

The Wildcats' first baseman, Tim Doty's team-leading eighth

See K-State Baseball Page 14



Post-Biles

Wildcats' Pat Maloney, designated hitter, attempts to steal second base during game two of a three-game series over the weekend, against the Missouri University Tigers.

Many types of birds migrate through Fort Riley in winter, spring

By Alan Hynke
DES Biologist

It's migration time. The ducks, geese and other migratory birds are once again headed to the north.

Migratory birds numbering some 836 species will repeat the journey completed by previous generations.

The main flyways will fill with the sounds of millions of birds en masse and the waterways will fill with sounds of honking, quacking and grunting.

Most birds migrate south each fall from their breeding grounds to their wintering grounds. They may winter in habitats throughout the southeastern U.S. or even farther south into Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

In the spring, they return north

to their breeding grounds, where young are produced and the cycle repeats.

There are four main flyways in North America: the Pacific, Central, Mississippi and Atlantic. Fort Riley lies in the Central Flyway between two of the most important migration refuges — Cheyenne Bottoms in central Kansas and the Platte River in Nebraska. They serve as a critical refueling point for migrating birds. Although many areas are used, these two areas are likely the most important in the Central Flyway and possibly in North America.

Migratory birds are protected by federal statute, which prohibits collection, possession or take of migratory birds. However, that does not preclude certain species from being hunted, including some 59 species of ducks, geese,

swans, cranes, various pigeons, woodcock, rails, snipes and gallinules and some sea birds. There are 777 species (93 percent

of migratory birds) considered non-huntable migratory birds. They are represented in groups, such as marsh and wading birds; birds of prey, such as hawks, owls and eagles; shorebirds; sea birds and pelagic birds.

Collection and possession of non-huntable migratory birds is very clearly defined. If you possess any bird, or parts of a bird, that is not a huntable species, it is an obvious violation of federal statute. However, the term "take" is poorly defined and has been a continuing source of controversy. It is especially complex in regard

to military bases, where the training mission can be deemed a take, such as heavy equipment moving across the prairie. The definition

of "take" has been battled back and forth in the courts for some time, with no apparent solution in sight.

Neotropical migrants are a group of birds that are more at risk than many of the other migratory birds. This group includes the warblers, vireos, flycatchers, hummingbirds, swallows and others that migrate to wintering grounds south of the United States — in Mexico, South America and Central America and in the Caribbean. They require two types of habitat many miles apart. If either habitat is altered, then the

population will begin to decline. Some of these birds are common to us — gray catbird, purple martin, barn swallow and chimney swift. Others, such as the red-eyed vireo, scarlet tanager, wood thrush and black and white warbler, may be familiar only to bird watchers.

Most of the birds that call Fort Riley home in the spring and summer are also migratory. Some species, like the Henslow's sparrow, travel to Kansas in search of a very specific habitat — uncultivated, 2 to 3-year-old tallgrass prairie. This type of habitat is becoming increasingly rare, since most tallgrass prairie is burned, grazed or hayed each year, leaving little standing grasses.

Unfortunately, the Henslow's sparrow is now considered a federal Species of Concern due to loss of habitat.

For years, the annual migration has fascinated humans.

In 1935, Aldo Leopold wrote in "A Sand County Almanac":

"A cardinal, whistling spring to a thaw, but later finding himself mistaken, can retrieve his error by resuming his winter silence. A chipmunk, emerging for a sun bath but finding a blizzard, has only to go back to bed. But a migrating goose, staking two hundred miles of black night on the chance of finding a hole in the lake, has no easy chance for retreat. His arrival carries the conviction of a prophet who has burned his bridges."

The spring of the year is indeed a time of faith. One implied by the passing of migrating fowl, raptors and warblers. This time of year, the broken silence of the sky will always be a welcome signal of spring.

ITR

The Information, Ticketing and Registration office is located in building 6918, across from the PX. The hours of operation for ITR are: Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. The office is closed on Sundays and holidays. For further information, call ITR, 239-5614 or 4415.

Check out the Department of Army Leisure Travel website at www.offdutytravel.com for more great deals on travel. ITR services and discount attractions tickets available to active duty military, retirees, National Guard, Reserve, Department of Army Civilians and family members.

Worlds of Fun

Worlds of Fun is opening for the season tomorrow, with a

Spring Special discounted ticket through ITR. Worlds of Fun has been called the thrill ride capital of the Midwest. For starters, hop aboard the Mamba. As it reaches speeds of 75 mph, you'll understand why it's one of the top roller coasters in the world. Try the Detonator. It will have you screaming for joy... or mercy, depending on how much nerve you have! At Camp Snoopy, you'll find rides like Woodstock's Airmail and Snoopy's Camp Bus. Plus kids can frolic with the lovable Peanuts characters.

Country Stampede

Have you ever attended a party with thousands of friends, national recording artists and four days on non-stop music and fun? Country Stampede is a weekend

country music and camping festival, June 26-29, at Tuttle Creek State Park, Manhattan. The weekend is fun filled and action packed, with great performers like Kenny Chesney, Martina McBride, Chris LeDoux, Sawyer Brown and many more. There will be fantastic food, colorful crafts and much, much more! Great early bird discounts are still available through ITR until May 1.

Branson, Mo.

As one of the top vacation destinations in the country, and approximately a six hour drive from Fort Riley, Branson offers a wealth of diverse entertainment and great military discounts to numerous attractions and hotels. Whether your idea of entertainment is being dazzled, spending a

day with your family at one of the attractions or finding a great deal at one of the area retailers, Branson is second to none in its scope of exciting activities. Silver Dollar City provides many rides, crafts and shows, like 'For The Glory,' that will make you feel proud. Plus, there are four fabulous festivals and so much more! Give ITR a call, and they be glad to put together a package to include hotel, shows and attractions to fit your budget.

McCain Auditorium

Canadian Brass will perform at the Kansas State University on April 27 at 3 p.m. These are the men who put brass music on the map! With their unbeatable blend of virtuosity, spontaneity and humor, they brighten the rosters

of concert halls, international festivals, and orchestra series throughout the world. Tickets are available for half price to military identification cardholders.

Kansas City Union Station

Kansas City Union Station is now featuring "American Originals and Freedom's Journey" through May 4. American Originals showcases documents that represent milestones in America history, including the Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Edison's patent application for the electric lamp and John F. Kennedy's handwritten notes for his inaugural address. Union Station is just one of eight stops on this national tour, bringing some of the rarely seen trea-

sures of the National Archives to people across the nation. Freedom's Journey traces American history back to its very beginning, using written records, portraits and artifacts to vividly illustrate the revolutionary ideas and actions that laid the foundation for the America you know today. Enjoy numerous other exhibits, extreme screen and Science City. Discounted Science City and Combo tickets are available through ITR.

Cruise Packaging

Authorized patrons can start taking advantage of special military discounts and bargain cruises. Stop by ITR and pick up a brochure or call 239-5614 to make an appointment with the cruise counselor.

Events planned to honor children

By Michael Watson

Staff writer

April has many events to foster good parenting skills and strengthen the bond between parents and children.

The events are part of Child Abuse Prevention Month and Month of the Military Child. The primary role of the celebration is to educate the community and children about neglect and abuse, and how to prevent it, said Carolyn Tolliver-Lee, Family Advocacy Program social services representative.

Upcoming events:
Puppet Show at the Post Exchange
Tomorrow, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Easter Egg Hunt, Soldier Family and Support Center
Tomorrow, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Parent Fair at Morris Hill Chapel
Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.,

Community Fair, Junction City Municipal Building
April 12, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Program helps soldiers find jobs after service

By David Horner

ACAP Center Manager

The Army Career and Alumni Program wants to make sure that soldiers are given every opportunity to succeed in their post-Army careers and save the Army some money at the same time. When a soldier leaves the Army and is unable to find employment, it falls to the Army to cover the cost of unemployment.

ACAP works with soldiers on a variety of skills, ranging from resume preparation to interviewing skills and even salary and benefit negotiation to help ensure soldiers can get jobs when they get out of the Army.

The Army Audit Agency conducted a study that found soldiers who completed the three and a half day ACAP workshop and then worked with ACAP coun-

selors were hired up to three weeks faster and made an average of \$6,000 - \$7,000 more per year upon leaving the service.

Soldiers and their families can start working with ACAP one year prior to their estimated time of separation and two years prior to retirement. ACAP does not affect reenlistment, with as many as 10 - 20 percent of soldiers who attend ACAP programs reenlisting.

Some soldiers come into the center without any idea as to what they want to do once they leave the service, said Jim Walker, a counselor with ACAP. Counselors will sit down with these soldiers and use computers and interviews to find jobs that best fit the soldier's personality.

In fiscal year 2002, the Army paid out more than \$118 million for unemployment. As of first quarter of 2003, the Army has

paid over \$36.5 million. That is an increase of 25 percent over the same period last year. ACAP tries to send soldiers into the job market as prepared as possible, helping to keep them off of unemployment and helping them get better jobs.

Commanders and NCOs are encouraged to get their soldiers in to the center as early as they can so that possible deployments or other unforeseen duties can all be accomplished without affecting the mission, said Walker.

Chess continued from page 11

"We realize many soldiers are deploying, but there are still a lot of outstanding chess players out there," he said. "This is their opportunity to compete at the highest level in Army competition and possibly represent the Army in inter-service and international competition."

The All-Army Chess Championship is part of the Army's Morale, Welfare and Recreation community recreation program, an activity of the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center in Alexandria, Va. It is one of more than 200 MWR programs the Army provides for soldiers and families worldwide. Further information is available at the Army MWR web site at www.armymwr.com.

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POST SERVICE DIRECTORY

Paladin's conduct direct fire mission, practice warfighting skills

By William Biles
Staff Writer

The 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery were at Range 29 conducting a live fire exercise to familiarize soldiers with the art of direct fire missions March 28.

The soldiers were training the sights of their M109A6 Paladin 155 mm Self Propelled Howitzer at targets that were approximately 1,000 - 1,300 meters down range.

The targets were actual military vehicles that were in an unserviceable condition.

The training event for the soldiers differed from their regular firing missions because it was up close and personal.

"This gives the gun crews an opportunity to direct fire and engage targets were they usually only get to indirect fire on them. They will actually get to see what there are hitting," said Lt. David Smartt, platoon leader, Battery B, 4th Bn., 1st FA.

The Paladin's main purpose is to be used as an indirect fire system using a self propelled weapons system, he said.

The M109A6 Paladin is the latest advancement in 155mm self-propelled artillery. The system

enhances previous versions of the M109 by implementing onboard navigational and automatic fire control systems. The M109A6 is the most technologically advanced cannon in the Army inventory, according to the website globalsecurity.org.

The training benefited the soldiers by letting them get better acquainted with their equipment.

"The only way we get to know our systems is if we fire rounds," said Smartt. "Through this training session, they (soldiers) get to know what it is like to direct fire on a target."

Due to the war with Iraq, today's training has an even greater importance.

"This is extremely important. When you go to war, you need to know the technological advances of the battlefield, and through this training we get to teach the soldiers how to fight if we ever get into a situation where we are fighting in a close quarter battle," stated Smartt.

The Paladin is an example of equipment bridging the gap between current systems and those planned for the future. It dramatically increases the responsiveness, survivability and flexibility of self-propelled cannon

artillery. Adding advanced technology to a 1950s chassis, the Paladin begins a revolution in the way the field artillery fights. Using computers, the Paladin can determine its own position on the ground and compute its own firing data, according to the Global Security website.

The training helps build cohesion throughout the four-man crew.

"When these guys come out here to fire, that's what they live for. When they come out here to fire, they learn to work together as a team, and that will build a cohesion between them," Smartt said.

The day's training was for all of the soldiers.

"This training is gauged toward every soldier in the crew. Every soldier in that gun plays a vital part in being able to direct fire," Smartt said.

Through training the soldiers on a regular basis, the unit benefits by being a more lethal element on the battlefield.

"We train about 11 months out of the year. Any time we have a chance to train like this (live fire), it makes the soldiers ready for combat. And, if they are ready for combat, that will benefit the unit," concluded Smartt.



Post Biles

An M109A6 Paladin fires down range at preset targets during a direct fire training exercise at Range 29 March 28. The targets were 1,000 - 1,300 meters down range.

K-State Baseball

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home run of the season was the one highlight for Kansas State.

At the bottom of the eighth, Wildcats' third baseman, Andrew Dunsmore, led off the inning with a rocket into right-center field. After a strikeout by out-

fielder Pat Maloney, Doty sent a 0 - 1 pitch screaming over the right field fence. The home run extended Doty's hitting streak to a team-leading nine games.

In other highlights of the game, Kansas State's left-handed

pitcher, Sean Clancy, (1 - 2) threw a season-high 6-1/3 innings as the game starter. Clancy allowed six hits and struck out four batters. However, he also committed three walks, two hit batters and was accountable for a

fielding error.

Tiger's starter, right-handed pitcher Garrett Broschius, fared better by earning his fourth win of the season. He allowed one run on three hits in his six innings of pitching. He totaled

six strikeouts and four walks.

The Tiger's right-handed pitcher, Nick Admire, earned his second save of the season, as he allowed two runs on two hits in three innings and totaled five strikeouts.

Special Weekend

The Manhattan Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring, "We support our Troops Weekend," April 12-13. For more information, call the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce at 785-776-8829 or go to their website at www.manhattan.org.

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